

GURUDEV SRI VETURI PRABHAKARA SASTRI

By Vissa Appa Rao (Junior)

I am Honoured to Receive a Request for Writing a Short Article about my Knowledge of Gurudev Sri Veturi Prabhakara Sastri.

I am fortunate to be born as the Eldest Maternal Grandson of Sri Sastri garu on the 25th November 1939 at his Residence: No.4 Venkataranga Pillai street, Triplicane, Chennai-5. My Mother Smt.Lalita was the Eldest Daughter of Sri Sastri garu and his wife Smt. Mahalakshamma. Grandfather was working at Oriental Manuscripts Library, Connemera House, Chennai. After my Birth my Grandparents moved over to Tirupathi, where Sri Sastri garu was Re-employed as Oriental Pandit in the TTD Oriental Institute.

My Father was Dr.Vissa Ramachandra Rao who was the Eldest Son of Prof.Vissa Appa Rao who was employed as Professor of Physics at the Presidency College, Chennai. My Father was a House Surgeon at the Stanley Hospital, Chennai. I was going at weekends and on holidays to Tirupathi. My younger Siblings: Rajeswari, Prabhakar and Vardhaman were born at Tirupathi residence of Sri Sastri garu at 'Sitaram Vilas' near Ramulavari Temple, Tirupathi. From my age of 4 years onwards I remember the Prayer Gatherings at the Sitarama Vilas.

Prayer Sessions at Sitarama Vilas

At Sitarama Vilas there used to be Regular Prayer Sessions in the Mornings and Evenings daily at 6 am and 6 pm. Many people coming from outside Tirupathi and also some local devotees used to attend the prayers. The attendance in the evening sessions used to be full with local attendees. I remember some of the regular attendees as Sri Kotta Venkateswara Rao of Sangam Jagarlamudi, Guntur District, Sri Kochi Venkateswara Rao (Tirupathi), Sri Kotta Ramakotayya of China Kakani, Guntur District, Sri Paramatmuni Radhapati (Tirupathi), Sri Sundara Ramayya (Tirupathi, Sri Vennelakanti Munikrishnayya (Tirupathi), Sri Raju Garu (Gundukolanu, W.Godavari District), Sri Nittala Padmanabha Swamy (Rajahmundry), and some students of Gurudev Prabhakara Sastri from the S.V.College of Oriental Studies, Tirupathi: Sri Timmavajhala Kodanda Ramayya, Sri Singaraju Satchidanandam, Sri Archakam Udayagiri Srinivasacharyulu, Sri Pochiraju Seshagiri Rao, Sri Bhashyakaracharyulu etc. Among the Lady Devotees: Smt.Chandrakantamma (Nellore), Smt. Chaganti Kalpavalli (Vijayawada), and Smt. A.V.Sarojamma (Wife of Sri Srinivasacharyulu). Sometimes the wives of the Outstation Male

Devotees and local devotees as listed above also were attending the Prayers. Also there was attendance at the Prayer Sessions by the Family of Gurudev: Smt. Mahalakshamma, Sri Sundara Murthy, Sri Guruprasad, Sri Ananda Murthy, Smt.Sujatha and Smt.Vinatha. My Grand Father Prof. Appa Rao, Parents Sri Ramachandra Rao, Smt.Lalita and myself and my siblings Rajeswari, Prabhakar and Vardhaman – were attending whenever we were visiting Tirupati. Gurudev's Brothers: Sri Chandra Sekhara Sastri and his wife Smt. Kamalamba, from Jaggayyapeta (Krishna District), Sri Sankara Sastri and his wife Sitamma and their Children from Muktyala (Krishna District) were also attending frequently.

Many of the Devotees used to Call Sri Prabhakara Sastri as '*Guruvu garu*' and Smt. Mahalakshamma garu as '*Amma garu*'. The male devotees used to sit in the Prayer Hall. I also used to sit in the Prayer Hall whenever there was sufficient space available. The Female Devotees used to sit in the Inner Chavidi along with Smt. Mahalakshamma garu. Before the starting of the Prayer session some visitors used to narrate their problems and Grandfather used to advise them as to how they should seek relief in their Prayers. The Prayers used to last for more than an hour. After the Prayers many people used to narrate their experiences in the Prayers. There used to be Special Gatherings on the 29th May, 31st December, *Master CVV's Birth date*: 4th August, according to the English Calendar and also on the Birth Date according to the Hindu Panchang, *Equinoxes* ⁿ (20th March and 21st September), *Sriramanavami* and *India's Independence Day* – Every Year. On these days after the Prayer sessions light refreshments and '*Prasadam*' (Food offered to the '*Paramatma*' or *universal soul*) used to be served to everyone.

Our Family Visits to Tirupati (1943-1950)

I remember these visits were during the summer holidays, Dipavali festival days and also on the occasions of the births of my siblings. From 1943 to 1947 I used to go from Madras to my Grandparents house in Tirupati, in the company of my Parents along with my younger siblings. We used to travel by train with a changeover at the Renigunta Station. From the Tirupati Station we used to travel either by a bullock cart or by a horse buggy to Sitarama Vilas. The jingling bells of the bullocks and horses were very pleasant to hear. During the years 1948 to 1950 we used to travel from Guntur via Vijayawada – Gudur – Renigunta to Tirupati by changing over trains at Gudur and Renigunta stations.

Two visits, one in 1948 and another one in 1949 are clearly imprinted in my memory. In the 1948 visit after the Prayer session Gurudev Prabhakara Sastri explained that after the completion of his 60 years of age,

He received Permission from Master CVV that he can write his Auto biography (*Pragna Prabhakaram*), giving Details of his journey in Life and his development in Master CVV's Yoga. The next visit in 1949 was in May month when the Marriage of Aunt Sujata with Sri Varanasi Subrahmanyam was celebrated. On this occasion Grandfather Prof. Appa Rao, my Parents, my Uncle Vissa Subrahmanyam, my siblings and I all attended the marriage. After the marriage two photographs were taken of all 'Yoga Mitras' (Yoga Friends) who gathered for Prayers. Due to some urgent works my Father and Grandfather, could not join the picture gathering and left Tirupati immediately

After the marriage. One Photograph was of all Male Members and the other was of all Female Members. In the absence of my Grandfather I was seated to the right side next to Gurudev Prabhakara Sastri in the picture gathering. One can see in the two picture gatherings all the family members of Gurudev Prabhakara Sastri along with his brothers and their families, my Mother, sister and brother, uncles Vissa Subrahmanyam, Varanasi Subrahmanyam and his brother.

Travel to Sri Kalahasthiswara Temple with Grandparents

I remember travelling with Grandfather Sri Prabhakara Sastri garu to the Sri Kalahastiswara Temple when he went there to examine the sculptures, inscriptions and palm leaf manuscripts for ancient texts. I was not aware of the Importance of his Discoveries at the Archives of the Temple!

On one occasion Grandfather asked Uncle Sundara Murthi to post an important letter in the post box nearby. As uncle was preoccupied with some work, he asked me to drop the letter in the post box near Sri Srinivasachari's house in the Ramulavaari Uttara Maada Street at a short distance from Sitarama Vilas. I did drop the letter sincerely as per his request.

Unfortunately due to some unknown reason, the letter did not reach the intended destination on time and Grandfather angrily chided uncle for delegating the duty to me. My uncle was very much upset at the scolding and did not take food and retired to the second floor terrace above. I remember grandmother entreating uncle dearly from the first floor terrace to come down and take food.



**1 -Gathering of Yoga Mitras at Tirupati, Sitaramavilas on 29th May 1949
(Male Members with Sri Prabhakara Sastri) From Left to Right: -Top Row – Standing...**

(1)Ramana, (2)Narasimhacharya, (3)Venkat, (4).....(5)Parthasarathy Nayudu, (6) Vennelakanti Muniswami,(7)Veturi Sundara Murthi, (8)Singaraju Satchidanandam,(9)C.Deendayal Nayudu, (10)Udayagiri Srinivasacharyulu with daughter Seshamma, (11)C.Subbaraman, (12)Rani Suryanarayana, (13)Veturi Guruprasad, (14)Veturi Sundara Ramamurthi, (15)Vissa Subrahmanyam

– Middle Row – Sitting...

(1)Veturi Sankara Sastri, (2)...(3)Kotta Venkateswara Rao, (4)Paramatmuni Radhapati, (5)Madabhushi Venkatacharyulu, (6)Vissa Appa Rao's grandson Jr. Appa Rao, (7)Veturi Prabhakara Sastri, (8)Vennelakanti Munikrishnayya, (9)Chandragiri Srinivasulu Chetty, (10)Anantha Sriramulu Setti, (11)Nayanar Subbayya Setti, (12)Veturi Chandrasekhara Sastri

- Front Row - Sitting... (1)Kotta Madhava Rao, (2)Kotta Ramakotayya, (3)Enaadi Setti, (4)Ramanayya, (5)Veturi Yoganand in the Lap of Bheema Rao, (6)Veturi Srivatsa in the Lap of Varanasi Subrahmanyam, (7)Varanasi Ramamurthy, (8)Kondra Subbayya Setti, (9)Mabbu Sundara Ramayya, (10)Sriramulu Setti, (11)Mabbu Krishnayya, (12)...., (13)Samiyar



**2 - Gathering of Yoga Mitras at Tirupati, Sitaramavilas on 29th May 1949
(Female Members with Sri Prabhakara**

Sastri) Top Row - Standing: Sri Prabhakara Sastri along with Maid Servants
Middle Row - Sitting : *From Left to Right* – (1)Veturi Lakshmidēvi with Sukanya (Ganesan) in the Lap, (2)Sulochana, daughter of Venkata Subbayya, (3)Manchala Subhadra in the Lap of Veturi Kamalamba, (4)Vissa Lalita, (5)Kotta Rangamamba, (6)Lanka Syamalamba, (7)Veturi Mahalakshamma, (8)Karumma, wife of Vennelakanti Munikrishnayya, (9)Veturi Sitamma, (10)Subbalakshamma, (11)Manchala Sundaramba, (12)Veturi Santha, (13)Lanka Prasunamba, (14)Challa Mahalakshamma
Front Row – Sitting : (1)Timmavajhala Tripura, (2)Singaraju Indiradevi with daughter Yashoda in the Lap, (3)Veturi Chiranjeevi, (4)Varanasi Sujata with Vissa Vardhaman in her Lap, (5)Vennelakanti Manjula, (6)Veturi Yoganand, (7)Jayamma, (8)A.V.Sarojamma, wife of A.V.Srinivasacharyulu with Veturi Srivatsa standing behind her, (9)(Vissa)Pingali Rajeswari, (10)Veturi Indira, (11)Sulochana, (12)(Veturi) Kasibhatla Sarala, (13)(Veturi)Ravi Vinatha, (14)Veturi Sadananda Murthy

Visits of Grandparents to our Houses

I do not remember any visits of our Grandparents to our houses at Visakhapatnam and Rajahmundry during 1940-1943 as these were my First four years of life after my birth. I understand that my Grandparents safely escorted me as a new born, along with my Mother in early 1940, to Grandfather Prof. Appa Rao's House in Visakhapatnam.

Later on when I was staying with my Mother at Prof. Appa Rao's House at Rajahmundry Grandfather Sri Sastri garu visited us. At that time my Father was working at Stanley Hospital, Madras. During 1943-1947 myself and Mother and after some time Vissa Grandfather and Uncle Vissa Subrahmanyam also joined us at Father's place in Mylapore, Madras. At Madras, Grandfather Sri Sastri used to visit from Tirupati, but was staying at the House of his Disciple Sri Kambhampati Satyanarayana Sreshti, in Triplicane. Sri Sreshti garu was popularly known as Chetti garu, was selling Freshly Prepared 'Ghee' (Clarified butter). My Vissa Grandfather, Father and

myself used to attend the Prayer sessions there. Once in one of the beginning visits Sri Sastry garu along with my Father met one of his Students – Sri Sarma, Founder of the Children’s Garden School, a Montessori System based School and enquired after my education at his School. I remember the visits of Sri Sastry garu at our Brodipeta House in Guntur during 1947-1949, while He was giving Radio Talks at Vijayawada, or while going on Archaeological search visits to coastal Andhra.

Sri Prabhakara Sastri’s Niryanam (30th August 1950)

Due to our misfortune Gurudev Sri Prabhakara Sastri garu left his Physical Body (‘Niryanam’) after brief illness on the evening of 30th August 1950. At that time my Grandfather Prof. Appa Rao was with Sri Sastri garu at his house in Tirupati and consoled Grandmother Smt.Mahalakshamma garu. The day after, that is on 31st August 1950 my Parents from Guntur, Sri Sastri garu’s brother’s families from Jaggayyapeta and Muktyala, and many disciples from outside Tirupati arrived at Sitarama Vilas. At that time I stayed back at Guntur to attend to my School. I happened to listen to the Akashvani Telugu News Bulletin announcement on the evening of Sri Sastri Garu’s Niryanam. In those days my uncle Sri Sundara Murthy was working as a Lecturer at the S.V.College, Tirupati. Later on he joined the Osmania University for his M.Sc. and Ph.D. in Organic Chemistry. My Second Uncle Sri Guruprasad was working at Hyderabad in Central Commercial Taxes Department. Uncle Sri Ananda Murthy was studying his B.A. (Hons.) Telugu course at the Presidency College, Madras.

Publications at the House of Sri Sastri Garu at Tirupati

From the age of 5 onwards I used to eagerly browse through the multitude of Classical and Oriental Publications in the Library of Gurudev Sri Sastri Garu. This enlarged my horizon of understanding and along with my Paternal grandfather Prof. Appa Rao’s Library exposure I was thrilled to understand Philosophy!

After the demise of Sri sasri Garu, his Autobiography “Pragna Prabhakaram” was published under the Financial Assistance of Gurudev’s Devotee Sri Kambhampati Satyanarayana Sreshti of Chennai. This publication had a Lengthy Introduction by Sri Kotta Venkateswara Rao, an ardent Disciple of Sri sastri Garu, went into Several editions and Reprints along with the Translations into English, Tamil, Kannada and Hindi Languages to cater to the Needs of Large Yoga Sadhakas all over India. I uploaded all these Editions onto the Internet.Archive.Org.

It is auguring that TTD is now restarting the 'Mani Manjari' periodical Publication! Of Sri Prabhakara Sastri Memorial Trust. I was lucky in attending the Inaugural Meeting under Sri S.B.P.Pattabhirama Rama Rao, the then Finance Minister at the Central Government! Later on I used to Visit Hon'ble Sri P.V.Narasimha Rao, the Central Foreign Minister and Later on Prime Minister of India in the Company of my Uncle Dr.Veturi Ananda Murthy. I was also present at the Inaugural release of Sri Prabhakara Sastri Publications at the House of the Prime Minister in October 1992! At that Function Largely attended by Scholars and Dignitaries I had the Good Fortune of Proposing a Vote of Thanks. Later on I was present at the Sata Jayanthi Celebrations held at New Delhi and transcribed Sri Acharya Athreya's Long Speech. I was fortunate to be present at the 125th Jayanthi Celebrations of Sri Sastri Garu also held on at New Delhi.

I made a List of E-Books of Sri Prabhakara Sastri Garu. I Request TTD to bring out the Vast Publications of Sri Sastri Garu including 'Neeti Nidhi' and other Publications as online E-Books soon.

[E Books Of Gurudev Sri Veturi Prabhakara Sastri Archive : Appa Rao Vissa \(Junior\) : Free Download, Borrow, and Streaming : Internet Archive](#)

I also tried to translate some of the Publications of Sri Sastri Garu into Hindi Language.

[On Sri Prabhakara Sastri Rachanas In Hindi : Vissa Appa Rao \(Junior\) : Free Download, Borrow, and Streaming : Internet Archive](#)

Further, I translated some Articles on Gurudev Sri Sastri Garu into English, From Yoga Life of Vissas Practicing Bhrukta Rahita Taraka Raja Yoga Part4 Contribution of Veturis for the Development of Yoga

4.1 Some Ailments and Certain Case Sheets *by Vissa Appa Rao **

4.2 Bhrukta Rahita Taraka Raja yoga and Spiritual Treatment – Case Illustrations:

Some of the Cases treated by Gurudev Veturi Prabhakara Sastri. *Reported by Dr.Vissa Ramachandra Rao**

- *Notes Prepared by Prof.Appa Rao and Dr.Ramachandra Rao on the Yoga Treatment by Sri Prabhakar Sastri.*

4.3 Our Elder Brother Sri Prabhakara Sastri *by Veturi Chandrasekhara Sastri ^m*

4.4 In My Knowledge.....: *by Veturi Sundaramurthi ^m*

4.5 Sweet Memories of my Mother: *by Varanasi Sujata ^a*



Old House of Sitarama Vilas, Tirupati
(Marriage of Master CVV with Mother Venkamma took place here, earlier in 1906)
(Also Residence of Gurudev VPS during 1940 – 1950)

